How do I know if I need to create a terminology?

The first question to ask yourself in determining if you need to create a terminology would be to determine if there is an existing terminology that you can re-use, subset or extend instead of creating one from scratch. When creating a terminology from scratch there are significant costs involved in development and maintenance and by utilizing one that is in existence you can reduce the costs and will also be using terminology that will have interoperability between systems with similar information.

Examples of existing terminology

- Unified Medical Language System (UMLS) developed by the National Library of Medicine (NLM) This link <u>UMLS</u>will take you to a list of over 100 vocabularies in the latest version of UMLS.
- NCBO Bioportal website hosted by the National Center of Biomedical Ontologies (NCBO). On this site NCBO there are more than 100 ontologies that can be browsed and searched for.
- The NCI BioPortal provides access to the NCI Thesaurus, the NCI Metathesaurus and other select and publicly accessible biomedical terminologies hosted at the National Cancer Institute(NCI). The original version of the BioPortal was written by the National Center for Biomedical Ontology (NCBO) and was used as the baseline for development of the NCI version of BioPortal. Much of the code base was reused and modified where appropriate to meet the needs of the National Center Institute Center for BioInformatics (NCICB). NCI BioPortal

If you decide to use an existing terminology things you will need to consider:

- Are the licensing and intellectual property terms surrounding the terminology acceptable for my needs
- Are there unique terms in your environment that will go beyond what the terminology provides
- Is the system *closed* or is it capable of extension
- What tools and education are required if I need to create an extension

If you still have questions, please contact our terminology experts through the discussion forum or <u>send an email to us</u>.